

# TYRANNIES OF THE SCHOOL

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To

J. L. Paton, Esq., M.A.  
Lat. High Master, Manchester Grammar School  
A Teacher, Friend, and Leader

## PREFACE

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The writer has to acknowledge his indebtedness to Mr J H Lumby M A, the editor of *The Schoolmaster*, who suggested the series of essays on which this book is founded and to the Directors of that journal for permission to republish them. Mr James Rice of *The Journal of Education* has been similarly generous. A part of the essay on School Apparatus was used in a paper given before the Oxford Conference of the National Union of Teachers.

It will be understood that in attacking School Tyrannies and cramping conventions the author is supporting an active and constructive educational Freedom. He cordially welcomes the inspiring teaching of such rebels as Norman MacMunn and Homer Lane. Any reform suggested in these essays is at any rate the result of practical experience.

It goes without saying but nevertheless he is glad to say it that he owes much to his colleagues at the Holt School, and to freelance friends.

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# TYRANNIES OF THE SCHOOL

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## CHAPTER I

### THE TYRANNY OF THE ORTHODOX

The slaying of dragons must have been some relief from the routine of the tilt-yard, and a big fat dragon suffering from heart disease must have been as great a joy to the mail-clad knight as the wineskins to Don Quixote. Most of us are anxious to strike "a ringing blow at sour authority's ancestral show." Teachers are supposed to respond readily to calls to rebellion. Some of them are even accused of being wild revolutionaries who have mastered the intricacies of that obscure lyric—the "Red Flag."

In actual experience, however, this flirting with violent disagreements does not amount

to very much. Most of us are too tame and the favourite fur on our official robes is real *lapin*, not bear nor even fox. We have to instruct others, it is true, but mainly on well-worn lines and from well-known books. People who quote the Bible or Shakespeare are fairly certain of appreciative recognition at teachers' meetings. Milton is, as one would expect, better known than Newbolt and Goldsmith than Flecker. The orthodox tram lines are, as a rule, well and truly laid, and we are safe in using them. Some of us are teachers and the sons and grandsons of teachers. In order to rivet the historical claims of certain types of education more surely, a consultative committee has just decided that the municipal secondary schools should in future be called grammar schools. It says "The associations are valued by the public." The public believes in an ancient and dignified tradition of culture. So by a *lucus a non lucendo* the secondary school is to be called a grammar school mainly because grammar is kept in a secondary place in this school. The schools of ancient name and interesting history will have to call themselves the "old original" grammar schools.

There is something sound in Confucius's idea of the rectification of names. He insisted that a name should be a recognition of expected conduct, and no man should be called a son unless dutiful, nor a king unless generous. No institution has a right to be called a school at all unless it may develop and enrich life. You might call it an institution, or a barracks, or a factory, in Confucian terminology if you will.

Teachers are apt to forget that their main duty is to train young people for a *life* whose physical circumstances are constantly changing, yet whose high spiritual ideals are sempiternal. They must help their pupils to be good men and women, capable of ready adjustment to newer knowledge and opportunities. The most important job we have is to make our pupils think, weigh, consider, and decide, accept responsibility, move with the times, and still keep alive the inner sources of strength and blessing. Let us agree about love, joy, peace, and the other spiritual gifts and then be perfectly free to discuss "Education with a Practical Bias", "Literature as a Form of Art", "Psychological Tests of Mental Characteristics",

"Shakespeare and the Musical Glasses", or any topic of the content of Education. But we must aim at making our pupils doers as well as hearers, they must think as well as read, and our success must be in *their* efforts, not in a recital of our own.

This is a high aim and is not universally held. It is more likely to be understood by a nation with spiritual aims than by one with aims which are mainly commercial. I am bound to confess I fear the reformers who can produce *a better scheme at a saving to the rates* good Samaritans—without the oil and twopence! I mistrust even an Advisory Committee which believes in adding a "*few* copies" of different works to the collection of books for class study rather than many copies of the same work, because one knows that unless each pupil has a copy of the book being taken with a class, class instruction as we know it in the "secondary" schools is impossible. No effective scheme of a great forward move in the education of the people of this country will ever be accomplished unless by such hearty goodwill of all classes as will enable the piper's bill to be paid as well as the tune he shall play to be called.



Progress in Education, with new ideals of teaching and equipment, playing-fields and workshops, must be costly Why pretend otherwise?

It will also be slow and must proceed by smooth stages, not by leaps and bounds We have not a clean sheet to write on but a palimpsest Steps towards educational reform will call for all our enthusiasm and optimism If we are fortunate we may succeed in making the lives of the people of the next generation a little happier, brighter, and better than our own have been There may be some indications of evolution This is why teachers must themselves escape from tyrannies So long as they find good things to do for others so long will they be alert and fresh Creative effort, as Homer Lane has taught, is the chief source of happiness in school Directly teachers become a mere part of an educational machine they will find their effectiveness weakened There are old fogies of twenty-five!

It is proposed to discuss some of the commoner school tyrannies in the hope of encouraging some of our number almost overwhelmed by routine and indifference—

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it is the deterioration of the best which is the worst—and confirming the faith of the valiant

You may take it that when you look back on any work which you have been able to do for others it is always what you did in spite of the orthodox and the usual that will give you pleasure. It is the gift of more than you can afford which counts, that is the fragrant spikenard outpoured. Let us rejoice in our maddest merriest generosity. Those who worship thrift are plentiful enough. Let us be grateful that on several occasions at least we acted against our "better judgment", and forgot and forgave. The shades of our foolishness in this direction will not, like the ghosts of our severities, rise and shake their gory locks at us. What matter if we were tricked at times. Perhaps by sweet compensation we may also have been liked.

We can liberate and liberalize our own minds by pleasant comradeship in life or in letters. Teachers have most need of blessing in this matter. Their classroom *ex cathedra* style is apt to grate somewhat on other folk. They are a little inclined to be pontifical and condescending, orthodox in their views, pe

dantic in speech, conventional in manners

As a stimulus to new ideals I cannot recommend official documents. Personally I have never found Departmental Reports in any way inspiring. They are not what Americans call the "loud noises." They seem to read like sentences of some timid tribunal "throned and delivering doom." There is nothing frivolous about them and I suspect any serious thing which has not the twinkle of frivolity. The Report as a piece of literature has no humour. That is a pity. It means it is not a humane document. One would not look forward to spending a pleasant evening with someone who had just drafted an Educational Report!

Books like *Some Educational Ideals and a Valiant Woman* which have a sincerity, a charm, and a humanity always appeal, and one can shed tears without apology over Pestalozzi's struggle. Nothing is more likely to refresh and renew your teaching spirit than good literature. It brings a cleansing and an inspiration which any number of notes of lessons will fail to give. In the realm of poetry you may be as catholic as you please and as unorthodox as may be. Books will

give us "new views to life and teach us how to live"

Then we need to bring to our pupils at times a challenge of convention, and to ask for a justification of orthodoxy even in such matters as their homes, their clothes, their hobbies and holidays. Why should they not consider the ideal home they would like to live in, how a house should be planned, and what rooms are required? Why should the speculative builder have everything his own way and build us and them three entertaining rooms instead of one good living room, and why must he arrange the house so that the sun shines on the larder? Why not the most important room get the sunshine even if you have to put the "front door" at the back? You might also ask your pupils about their holidays, and what holiday they would take if they had freedom to choose. You could talk about trips abroad and the glories of the path to Rome or to Zermatt with a knapsack on one's shoulders. Comfort and health in relation to clothes, hats, and boots might also be discussed and the inanities of fashion laughed at, since these cannot escape the keen criticism and merciless vision of

the young Their eyes are not blinded by conventional respectability If they could be encouraged to make fun of the banal and the stupid they would be on the way to the more excellent

One may live in a town, in a street, and near tram-lines, be supplied regularly with electric light and quite good water, even be within hail of a workhouse and a cemetery, and yet believe in the magic of other places.

## CHAPTER II

### THE TYRANNY OF THE TIME TABLE

Many schools could do with an expanding site and movable buildings, and more with an elastic time-table. There are people who have a genius for constructing time-tables. They do it with diagrams and little flags. It is a sort of scholastic chess. As a rule the maker of the time-table is a head teacher, who does not have to work to one himself. Of course, he takes a share from time to time, and he may even have a fixed time on a school time-table in which he sets himself to do certain specified things. But his time is not arranged for him for the whole week. But task-mastering is not so monotonous as task-doing. If you notice in the Ashmolean the Egyptian scarabs which delineate task-masters you will always see a whip in the hand, although as the museum labels tell you, "the whip is sometimes allowed to drop



to the side of the task-master's person " The overseer had a " let-up " occasionally, for which the overseen must have been grateful. A time-table appears to be a device for the help of the teacher, to relieve him of the necessity for making constant judgments, a plan to promote the smooth working of the school as a whole, to enable the fullest use to be made of school facilities, woodwork shop, drill hall, laboratory, &c., a piece of school mechanism absolutely necessary for the successful mechanical working of a school. In order to accomplish these functions the time-table does a great deal more, and is often, by the completeness of its work, a hindrance, a bondage, and a tyranny for those whom it was designed to serve.

By the aid of the time-table as in common use, the whole of the working hours of the class teacher are mapped out, the entire programme of the work is indicated, Arithmetic is begun at a certain hour, Geography at another, even the place of Spelling as distinct from Writing is fixed. This is useful to the form monitors, for they can give out the necessary books to the class who unfortunately have not in their own personal charge or pos-

session the books they will require to use. The time table seems designed to direct, control, and suggest all that the class is to design or do or say, which is to give it a power like that wrongly imputed to the Deity, who has at least given to unworthy man the right of choosing good or ill. What a terrible tedium would be imparted to life if to school time tables were added play time-tables and meal charts! Who would not detest rice pudding if he had it every day or fish pie if it turned up every Friday! Of course, there would be advantages in a fixed and scientific dietary, and all the little vitamins would get their proper share of attention. Some folk are so well drilled that they would like to see even love making "by numbers", as the army exercises were done!

My own suggestion would be that in every time table there should be *some spaces not filled* some periods which might be marked as for private study, silent reading, or whatever you may wish to call it. Then, if a time-table has to be drawn to be approved by H M I—although this gentleman's real approval is of the arrangement in the primary schools, of the religious instruction in

accordance with the Conscience Clause, and to the teaching of subjects that are allowed by the Code of Regulations in force, and not really as to the distribution of school time to various subjects of the curriculum—in such a time table it would always be possible to give variations at the discretion of the teacher. The time-table might show Arithmetic or English for a certain period and Geography or History for another, with a time analysis which would show that the teacher intended to keep a certain sense of proportion in view. But surely it would not matter a row of pins to any intelligent inspector what the particular variation selected was on the day of his visit so long as the work was being pursued in a successful manner. It might well be that a lesson in a certain subject was continued over two periods because two periods were necessary to make the step which the class might thus reasonably make without wasting time by again beginning the necessary preparations. It is quite possible that the variety of a new arrangement of the day's work might be a surprise element which for the class might mean a fresh stimulus. One would like to try the effect on a time-table-ridden

school of beginning with poetry early in the morning instead of the last period of the afternoon! How cheerful to do "He Tell among Thieves" instead of stocks and shares!

Most of the methods of the New Education aim at elasticity of the time-table in the interest of the freedom of the pupil. In plans like the Montessori System, the Dalton or Howard plans, or such a variation of them or partial adoption of them as is in use in many schools, it is absolutely necessary to depart from a fixed school table. The Montessori pupil goes to whatever piece of apparatus pleases his fancy, the Daltonian has his allotments, but may make them up as he wishes. On the Howard plan pupils whilst working in the lower forms on a common plan and in the examination forms on a fixed curriculum, have three or four years' working on a "house" system with assignments so arranged that the pupils may from time to time drop a subject if they wish to do so. Theirs, however, is "this freedom" with a day of judgment looming in the background. They may drop a subject, but they know they will have to attempt to recapture later on their first fine careless rapture for it.

A very sensible plan comes from Wallasey, in Cheshire, where the mornings are time-tabled and the afternoons are relatively free. It is claimed in especial for this plan that the development of school societies is promoted readily by this means. This is, of course, tremendously important, for the freedom and inspiration is obvious of small bands of pupils of different ages working together in Dramatic, Musical, or Art Clubs, or hearing and discussing papers given by their own members, of paying visits to places of artistic, historic, or industrial interest without infringing on the time allowed for formal school work. All these modern educationists, therefore, are amongst the number of those carrying on the good work of time-table breaking. They are indeed amongst the conquering, holding, daring, venturing pioneers. Even to those who image time-tables to be sacrosanct there come occasional twinges. There is the village school-mistress from the "Green Box" who wishes play-time were not *compulsory*. She believes a recess most highly desirable, but thinks it should be "a privilege *continually renewed* like the Army and Navy Estimates."

Readers will have gathered from this chapter

that the writer believes in the right of a teacher to modify his time-table. In the primary schools the school log-book gives an opportunity of an *ex post facto* repentance if this is desired, or the opportunity of a challenge and a response if it be called in question. But it must not be forgotten that many who make authority the excuse for want of initiative, create a bogey of their own which they call the Board of Education or the Local Education Authority, and attribute to it a perverseness and a stupidity which they themselves create! "The Inspector would never allow this!" is usually the remark of one who does not wish to change his plans. Mr. Guedalla tells us that "Napoleon in a life-time of unsparing effort rarely achieved the Napoleonic", and it may be gratifying to remember that Directors of Education only completely direct intermittently. Besides there are few officials who are not glad to have free lances under their banners. At least the *condottieri* can fight! Anything with a backbone is better than a jelly-fish!

Those who advocate freedom should at least be consistent and concede it to others

The framing of a time-table gives a good opportunity for a frank discussion of school plans with the whole of the school staff. The more free the discussion and the more real the co-operation the less the chance of listlessness and indifference. A change of work is often a much needed tonic for a colleague. It is strange that the making of *a reasonable plan for the effective working* of the various parts of the school is so often regarded as so particularly and peculiarly the work of the head teacher that in this important enterprise his colleagues are ignored. The ultimate decision, of course, is in his hands, but he is fortunate who has whilst it is being made the help and criticism of those whom the time-table most concerns, viz those who have, day in and day out, to obey its silent but imperious behests.

## CHAPTER III

### THE TYRANNY OF ROUTINE

We begin teaching with breathless excitement. Every lesson is an experiment, and every day brings a new adventure, not to mention the "chance, and craft, and strength in single fights." Our failures and anxieties prevent us from becoming listless. They may even make our career wildly exciting. We wonder what new mischief the bad boy of the form will be up to to day, or how many mistakes in dictation our erratic friend in Standard III can possibly make this time. Fresh from a training-college, with high hopes and almost impossible ideals, we find that the first thing we must acquire is a working knowledge of school routine and an adequate technique. Without these we are the sport of experienced pupils who know our shortcomings at sight and who have no mercy. The danger is that in learning our trade we



may lose our zeal. We may become the victims of our own good habits. These, like "ill uses", may also arise and say "Thou hast made us lords and cannot put us down."

To become effective members of the staff of a school we must learn to be orderly, regular, precise. We may consider ourselves as artists, but we are artisans too, and have to attend to the demands of irksome duties. The poet and the painter are allowed latitude in matters of routine because they have the "artistic temperament", work by inspiration, and when it suits them. The teacher who neglects his routine duties is a nuisance to his colleagues, and may be a danger to his school.

We must confine routine to its own humble province. It must be our servant and not our master. The necessary but comparatively unimportant things must be done so regularly that they make no demands on our higher mental processes. Routine rightly used will, for instance, make us always punctual in attendance. If we are unable to be present to do our work, it will be merely a matter of routine that we send a message immediately to the school that is expecting us, and

to the Head, who will have to make arrangements for someone to deputize for us. Should we be the unfortunate victims of a stroke or an infectious disease we shall not be able to write a polite letter which would otherwise come as a matter of professional automatism. When we have a register to mark we should mechanically mark it at the appointed time, and as a matter of routine *check* it. It does matter that if it is a record it should be an accurate record. It is so simple to check it at once, and if checking is done as a matter of routine it becomes a subconscious affair, the higher functions of the brain relegating this piece of work to the same department which puts on our gloves or ties our neckties without pretending that the work is tiresome. Habit simplifies action and diminishes fatigue, as Professor James has told us, and the more habitual we can make the little pieces of routine work which are demanded of us in school, the more we shall be free to think seriously, and even excitedly, of the other more important work which is before us.

One feels very sorry for those teachers who by reason of the narrowness of the content of their teaching—having to go over

the same ground to the same sort of class year after year—find their work so dull that they become automatic and listless. For them a paralysing formality has set in. Such teachers may tell you shamelessly that they like taking certain classes because they have no new preparation to make! They forget that lessons that can be given without preparation may usually be omitted without loss. Even if the subject-matter is quite familiar the method of approach should from time to time be reconsidered. A walk to school is an excellent plan for promoting freshness of method if you utilize wisely the thinking time it gives you. A pocket notebook in which you jot any new plan or experiment or illustration will often serve an excellent purpose. After all, it is just this freshness of illustration, the carefully prepared impromptu, that is the very Alpha and Omega of the teacher's craft. His business is not to invent, say, simultaneous equations, so much as to devise means of making his pupils understand them or even re-invent them if he is a real artist and loves a difficult job, even with the quaint name of "*heurism*." His important work is to turn old lamps into

new, to put old truths into new forms, to revise his work by unusual plans. He may indeed allow his class to question him if he wishes to make a notable change of method and give a new interest to his technique. One has seen classes questioning the teacher with huge delight. "Infinite variety" he must aim at, and this means careful thought beforehand, intelligent reading of helpful books, and some note-taking.

There is no surer way of escaping from the tyranny of routine than by the liberation of mind, which comes from reading inspiring books. The books written by the great masters and teachers of their subjects, the books of massive suggestion, bring a workaday teacher into touch with the great minds of his profession. *Every school should have a teachers' library.* In any case, every teacher should use a library. Unless he reads he will lose his interest and his freshness. He must acquire in order to bestow. He must dip his own bucket into the well if he is to fill their pails. The American teacher is urged by an authority in his own land to "mop up inspiration and radiate pep." If this can be achieved, apart from natural gifts, it will

be mainly by wise and liberal reading. May one give an example or two? Certainly none who has to teach Scripture will deny the practical help of such a book as Sir George Adam Smith's *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, and Haslingdon and Cushing's *Human Geography* will give a teacher of geography a fresh outlook, while, to mention a new book *English Men and Manners of the Eighteenth Century*, by H. S. Tibberville is a delightful source of teaching suggestions, and at a half-sovereign is quite one of the cheapest books the Oxford Press has produced. It is the high-priced books which are really the cheapest, and if the shadows of routine are to be driven away quickly nothing is more effective than a new book or a new school effort. To start a school or form magazine, get up a play, organize a chess club or a mock Parliament, give a concert, do something outside the ordinary arrangements of school work, is to help both staff and pupils by the process known to pedants as *peripeteia* and to sportsmen as a 'let up'.

No plan is so capable of breaking the fetters of routine or more useful in producing the 'team spirit' in education than the pre-

paration and production of a school play. It unifies the resources of the school. It provides so many interesting things to do—it calls for so many different gifts, and shows so splendidly how one art helps another. There is the scenery to be made and painted. And what a wealth of possibilities for the constructional department in making the various properties! In Greek plays the production of satisfactory Greek helmets may mean a whole department of skill and invention in itself. The poster specially designed and the window bills bring art to advertisement's aid. Then there are music and dances, the stage arrangement and the acting, the stage lighting and the make-up of the performers, to say nothing of the training in correct and audible speech. All departments of school activity must be harnessed for the play's production, and, in the end, the play's the thing wherewith we catch the conscience of—the Staff, at any rate. Nor must we forget the friendly co-operation of the parents and governors who come to see the performances, and the criticism of the Press who are interested in it.

It is certain that Music, Art, and the Drama

do belong to that mysterious remainder when what we have learnt by routine is forgotten, but one knows by experience that a school effort which makes many demands on the Staff should not be repeated at too short intervals. After all, it is by routine that the ordinary work of the school is done, and if the school play gives the school new life and vigour it will have served its main purpose.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE TYRANNY OF EXAMINATIONS AND MARKS

We are so practical a nation that we need every now and then someone to warn us of materialism—to tell us about something which may not be tested by examinations and rewarded by marks, to remind us nobly that "Education is the transmission of life from the living through the living to the living." Of course, St. Thomas is a saint nearer to the man in the street than the beloved disciple. We have little imagination and less faith, so tests abound. We have test tubes in our laboratories and test matches in cricket.

We must not object to be tested so long as the test is fair. But we know from bitter experience that examinations, especially external examinations, are very often quite unfair. The more general an examination is the more it is standardized, the greater the chance of injustice in individual cases. It is almost



impossible to test a young person's educational proficiency by such impersonal means as an external examination unless you reduce the test to a merely *mechanical one*. This is precisely what happened in elementary education under the system of Payment by Results. All the children were tested every year at an examination conducted by external examiners, and their proficiency in reading, writing, spelling and calculating was definitely noted as passing, or failing in, a certain test. The Government machine for testing the work at this level was an accurate one. It was definitely discoverable and discovered whether children could read and write. But what happened finally was that the very success of the machine caused its overthrow. The schools became merely another part of it, and results were produced with the same certainty as they were tested, and on the same low level. Mass production was secured, intelligence was killed, ideals neglected. The schools became factories and produced the goods the State demanded. The school *robots* hated the school and all connected with it. The system passed unwept, unhonoured, and unsung—even the Chief Inspector of the

Board of Education calling it an educational tragedy

We get a glimpse of a more enlightened use of examinations to-day in what takes place at the Universities. Here the professors examine their own students on the special lines of work which have been presented to them, and have the help of fellow-teachers from other Universities to keep up the standard of University honours in the various subjects. The Secondary Schools are less fortunate. Their pupils are examined in the main by University teachers, whose knowledge of the performance of youths and maidens of sixteen and seventeen is not very convincing. The teachers at the schools are not directly consulted in these examinations, although there are representative teachers on the examination boards. The pupils' school record is only consulted in what is called "border line" cases, and there is a growing tendency to make such examinations national instead of local. Even the Higher Certificate Examination which is a scholarship examination for University admission is practically an external examination and there is no real co-operation between teacher and examiner.

as in the University examination for degrees. The result of a demand for the same percentage of marks for each standard for all subjects for all examining bodies will be in the end a deadly uniformity, a fixed examination type, and an authoritative text-book. Interest will be deadened, originality extinguished, and experiment prevented. This will make the examination the master of the school and not its servant. The problem may be stated thus. What is required is an individual syllabus drawn up by a teacher who knows his subject and wishes to treat it in a special way in accordance with his own qualifications and the interests of his pupils—perhaps with some very definite bias for sufficient reason. The work of the pupils in an examination which might conceivably be either written or oral, or both, should be tested by the teacher in co-operation with an external assessor, or the teacher should supply a list of his pupils in order of merit, and the examiner should take note of the work as reported by the teacher and give the pupils credit for what the school is able to guarantee. In time the need even for such a limited form of partly external examination should dis-

appear, and the University be able to accept the statement of any duly qualified school affiliated to it. Thus freedom is secured at present in America, where doubtless compensating tyrannies abound.

What is sauce for the goose is sauce for the gander, and any attempt to bring back on the Primary Schools the burden of external examinations needs to be stoutly resisted. There are so many people whose only means of securing efficiency is "checking off" other people. It is those who are themselves imitative who resent originality. Yet we should all realize that it is the special outlook of the school, its general tone, its living force, which really matter. One can hear the crack of the overseer's whip in most of the arguments for the reimposition of external tests. "Check your teachers, frighten your teachers, weaken your teachers, and examine them," is a poor slogan. We suggest as a variant "Train your teachers, inspire your teachers, encourage your teachers, and *trust them!*"

Those teachers whose ideals are low, who are ungenerous and untrustworthy—if any exist—will be just the people who, knowing

on what a low level you intend to test them, will respond by making the cleverest arrangements to circumvent you. You may break the heart of the enthusiast whilst the slacker is grinning at the clever way he has misled you. Do you imagine that the schools which in the bad old days secured 98 per cent or more of passes in the three R's were the most honest and efficient institutions? Were there no illicit associations of high percentage earners? Examinations were a growing tyranny, and their most deadening effect was the monotony of the teacher's work. Freedom is associated with new efforts, new views, a constant changing of plans to suit new conditions, growth, development. The poor prisoner says "Of seed-time or harvest, of the reapers bending over the corn or the grape gatherers threading through the vines, of the grass in the orchard made white with broken blossoms or strewn with fallen fruit of these we know nothing, and can know nothing. For us there is only one season, the season of sorrow. The very sun and moon seem taken from us. Outside, the day may be blue and gold, but the light that creeps down through the thickly muffled

glass of the small iron barred window beneath which one sits is grey and niggard. It is always twilight in one's cell as it is always twilight in one's heart.' There was a great deal of educational twilight in the school prisons of those days.

A corresponding subject which however, concerns Secondary more than Primary Schools is the question of marks. Marks are the first stages of the great testing system. In some schools marks are supposed to be allotted for each lesson's work. These are then totalled by the week, month, or term. Mark adjustment is succeeded by place-in-form lists and a mechanical equivalent is obtained for each scholar's work and ability. One has known cases where the mark system has been a nightmare of dread and worry to the whole staff and the amount of competition introduced by it sufficient to set each pupil against all his fellows. Surely the sanest method of competition is the struggle of each student *to improve his own record*. The ideal form or class would have as its aim that *all* the pupils were doing well. The individual performances of members of the form could be recorded by using a system

that estimated ability and industry without bringing the statement of result into the realms of mathematics. The use of the system of Class I, II, and III marks or the  $\alpha$   $\beta$   $\gamma$  system is well known and well supported nowadays. It does kill the mark-hunting spirit which refuses to work without numerical bribes, and limits the possibility of adding marks together in mercenary competition.

The actual correction of the pupils' exercises is another problem of the schools. It is obvious that in certain cases where written exercises are demanded and are produced, errors in these should be noted—either by the teacher or by the pupils themselves—and a correct copy secured. A boy's Latin or French exercise containing errors should not be a means by which mistakes are perpetuated, and this will be so if mistakes are unchallenged and faults unchecked. The old-fashioned plan of a clean copy after revision is still quite wholesome. On the other hand, there may be exercises, such as the working out of mathematical problems or making a sketch, where the ill-results of actual "marking" of the exercise have not so obvious a

result. Many of the exercises worked by the pupils can be overseen during class-work—the geography master may rapidly examine the maps he has asked for. There is obviously no reason, if you accept the general system of marking by classes, previously referred to, why every exercise worked out should be classified. Errors should be detected and mistakes corrected. And the system by which this is done should not overwhelm the teacher. As a rule the more rapidly the marking follows the working of the exercise the more effective it is. Nothing is more pathetic than to note a young teacher red-inking page after page of exercises which the pupil will instinctively try to ignore and to which he will not willingly refer. Loose-leaved books are both good and bad. Their use needs to be carefully guarded lest they be a very convenient method of promoting oblivescence, certainly when they consist of a number of exercises chronologically arranged and all correct, they do avoid the *inferiority complex* which is encouraged by the sight of past unfortunate adventures of the inaccurate and sometimes despairing pupil. Finally there are some subjects which



should not be examined or marked, especially religious instruction and moral training. The cultivation of the smug and the humbugging is to be avoided. Many a young rascal has received a prize for religious knowledge. Even essays on moral subjects are unsound psychologically, as they divorce sentiment from action and encourage priggishness.

## CHAPTER V

### THE TYRANNY OF FORMAL DISCIPLINE

We have all some sympathy for the lost dog of whom it was stated in the advertisement of his loss that he answered reluctantly to "Damn you, come here!" He was a pioneer in free discipline and deserved a better fate. Amongst the questions which are still asked by colleagues who desire to secure for themselves demi-gods and supermen on their staffs the most important is "Is he a good disciplinarian?" Of course, the correct answer is "It all depends on your school tone and spirit, its accord with his ideals, and what authority you give him in carrying these into practice." It is reasonable to ask if the candidate has strength of purpose and character, a forceful personality, a cheerful disposition.

But the disciplinary effect of these in any given environment is a function of many

variables It all depends If the school is run on methods of harsh discipline, if the main power utilized is authority and the principal sanctions punishment or sarcasm, a man of other ideals will fail and will suffer much in the process But if it is the aim of the school to enable pupils to learn to do right for its own sake and to develop self-discipline, if the school curriculum furnishes an outlet for the child's mental, physical, and emotional expansion if the school atmosphere is one of happy co operation and cheerful work, then the stern disciplinarian may find himself in uncongenial surroundings, and, robbed of his power to punish, may have no resources for commanding interest and attention Of course a teaching technique must be acquired The teacher must handle his class—even call his register and write on his blackboard—as one who knows his job and not as a nervous amateur whose very funk is an invitation to misdeeds

But the old ideals of formal discipline, of class rigidity and awe struck silence are so unnatural and unnecessary that one wonders at their retention anywhere The public school tradition has made flogging respectable,

our leaders were birched at school, and, like the fox who lost his tail, recommend corporal punishment as being excellent for others, and one of the benefits they can advocate for the schools of the less wealthy classes which would cost little to the rates. Canes are cheap, and the price of birches is not prohibitive. So if intellectual stimulation may be gained by inflammation of the cuticle, why spare the rod? The lash has gone from the army and the navy, whipping at the cart-tail is no longer an available amusement for the general public. There is still the child at school who may be beaten, and it is cheaper and simpler to beat him than to understand him and keep him usefully at work. To do the latter implies small classes, better equipment, and more intelligent teachers. In days when, in the Elementary Schools, classes of ninety were not unknown, punishment had to be swiftly meted out. The good disciplinarian was one who, like the King in Tennyson's "Princess",

With long arms and hands,  
Reached out and picked offenders from the mass  
For judgment

One of the great differences between Ele-

mentary and Secondary Schools is that the boy in the Secondary School is more capable of independent and continuous work. He has learned something of the way to work for work's sake. He has had opportunities of developing initiative and self-reliance. His work in laboratory, art-room, and library has made him a disciplined student. Had he been taught in a class with fifty or sixty others with artificial strictness of discipline he would have had fewer opportunities for learning self control. Again, he has always been well supplied with interesting books, with atlas, dictionary, and text books at his side he can always 'go on with his work' and never be at a loss for something to do. If it is necessary to flog a boy with these opportunities in order to make him work he is unworthy of the chances that are his. Yet the headmaster of a great school has said "I always flog for laziness." The curative nature of flogging for a public school boy is almost magical. It reminds one of the time when barber-surgeons always let blood for fevers. Some of their patients died, but the professional slogan remained. Read Mr Arthur Machen's *Hidden Glory* if you want

to know what the effect of this theory is to-day

The fact is that the better the school the less need there is for formal discipline. There are, of course, moral delinquencies to be dealt with. But even with delinquents the first thing is knowledge of the case, and not primitive, off-hand, mechanical punishment. A boy who does wrong at school should be the subject of scientific inquiry. In a modern school there are so many interesting right things to be done that the wrong-doer is at once marked down as eccentric and abnormal. It is always worth while to find out *why* a boy does wrong. It is possible that on due inquiry the only possible method of treatment of the wrong doer may be punishment. You may believe that by such punishment for his offence you will reform the offender. That is a reasonable position to take up. But to regard corporal punishment as an ordinary necessary classroom resource by which the work of the school proceeds normally, to cane for mistakes in spelling or false quantities in Latin, is to support a tyranny which ought to have disappeared. It is so easy a course to adopt that one may be certain it is wrong.

" Force maketh nature more violent in their return," Bacon said, and harshness in discipline makes rebels. We cannot do better than go back to Comenius with his familiar image. " A musician does not dash his instrument against a wall, or give it cuffs or blows because he cannot draw music from it, but continues to apply his skill till he extracts a melody. So by our skill we have to bring the minds of the young into harmony and to the love of studies if we are not to make the careless unwilling and the torpid solid." Norman MacMunn's too brief career shows us how much can be done in a short time by those who believe in freedom and sympathy and who practise what they preach. It is the old fable of the sun and the wind. As MacMunn says " By a look or a word you change the contest of formal discipline to one of gentleness or self-sacrifice, even of self-surrender. But here the contest is just as real, the sense of victory just as complete, if the child can outdo you in reconciliatory and friendly measure."

" Un siècle qui, obéissant par *peur plus que par respect*, n'a jamais manqué une occasion de se révolter " (Fericero)

The best way to secure the willing respect for authority is for those in authority to respect the personality of the child and remove his fears. Where children are cheerfully occupied, where their gifts are developed and their interests recognized—in this world of happy co-operative work the tyranny of formal discipline does not exist. The advocates of a vigorous authority and an unquestioning obedience have in mind the organization of an army. The soldier whose metier is not to reason why but promptly to obey is, of course, only the pawn in the war game, and is moved by the officer in authority. Yet some of the most famous military episodes are singularly wanting in common sense and remain glorious, but stupid. It was not found that the free discipline of the Colonials made their soldiers less effective. It was a shock to tradition that the officers should be called by their Christian names, but the spirit of camaraderie stands for more in a crisis than does mechanical obedience.

In every department of life self determination is more and more accepted. The Church is only recently learning that she must persuade and not coerce. Acceptance of religious



ideals is a matter for the individual. What we do is the supreme test of what we believe. In art and music and letters we need originality, initiative, and enterprise. These can be secured only if we encourage our children to make efforts suitable to their own stage of life and growth. It is not so long since that the notion of children writing their own verses would have been regarded as the maddest experiment. That children should design posters or write plays is regarded by the "die-hards" of discipline as a questionable performance, and, in moments of intenser scepticism, the examples shown, as "fakes." "How can such things be?" says the person whose memory of school days is that of fear and repression. How the old-fashioned martinet would have sneered at the verse or design of the audacious youth!

Education is an inspiration, an opportunity, a release. It opens magic casements and brings vistas of opportunity and effort. Children are happy at school because of this, and truancy is practically unknown. We have learned our business better. Formal discipline is disappearing. We know how important it is in our lessons to let the

Of all artificial lessons the old *object lesson* is the least effective. It is a lesson which recognizes that observation through sight and handling is an important thing to stimulate, but unless there is an object available for each pupil in the class it merely pretends to proceed by the concrete. At its worst it may be a lesson on such a remote object as an ostrich or a whale, neither of which lend themselves readily to classroom handling. So the picture of the object must be introduced. In the early history of teaching such pictures were the sole *objets d'art* on the classroom walls, and when the due moment arrived the teacher fished one down from its nail on the wall and fastened it to an easel or flopped it over a blackboard and the lesson began. Pupils were encouraged to note the object's various parts and were told "where found" and "uses." An Australian told the writer that one of these lessons he heard in the back blocks had approached its desultory conclusion, there had been no excitement when the whale was introduced—*Moby Dick* had not sprung to fame in those days—and no enthusiasm for the verbal description and dissection which followed.

The class was bored and the teacher exhausted, and still there was time remaining. So in despair the teacher said "And now, boys, what about his gullet?" Quite recently it was one's good fortune to see some children playing school and to hear one of the "class", tired of listening, say "When are you going to let me be the teacher?"

The thing which strikes an outsider most when an object lesson is in progress is the great eagerness of the pupils to take a share, to give an answer. The avid desire to do something is inspiring, the ignoring of this desire, sometimes by faulty technique but often by the exigencies of circumstance, is really pathetic. The waste of time is almost tragic. One notices that one after another of the keenest young people withdraw from the performance as much as to say, "Well, if you won't let me do something, you can do it all yourself!" Of course, a really skilful teacher may give individual members of quite a large class some small share of the work, may accept an occasional answer, or bring out to the front several people in turn to take up some little organized jobs, hold the orange or light the candle, if the lesson is on

children do the work, make the discovery, paint the pattern, write the story *They no longer go to school to hear us say our lessons!* They are artists and producers and creators and they go to school about their *own* business. Of course, there must be rules in the game as there are in football and cricket, but they soon learn these and find out that the rules are only to help them to play the game better and with more regard for the others who are in the team. There is, of course, no absolute freedom in school or elsewhere. All freedom is relative, and in society we are really free only to do what will not hurt or disturb others. Were we shipwrecked on an isle peopled with cannibals we might find that there was some clashing of ideals of freedom. We might appear as a *dish* instead of guests at the banquet. This is a fable. Discipline must never be so free that the teacher is a victim and not an active director.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE TYRANNY OF THE ORAL LESSON

The old-fashioned schools are still furnished with galleries, and one sees even infants' classes sitting in desks arranged in tiers like a lecture theatre of a University, and for the same reason, viz that the lecturer may see all his pupils at the same time, and that they may see his demonstration table and blackboard or map. The defect is unfortunate because accommodation, in a way many people fail to realize, has much to do in determining the method which may be pursued. Lecture theatres are all right for Universities, but chairs and tables are essential to Kindergarten work, and a room in which, on simple tables or plain benches, light wood-work, cardboard work, or clay modelling can be done, would give a welcomed practical bias in the schools to many lessons which are now, unfortunately, merely oral.

the seasons, and not even Atlas himself could have a keener sense of responsibility than his deputy in the lesson has. But the pupils in a secondary school who are classifying specimens of flowers or examining sections under a microscope or finding the specific gravity of a metal by weighing it in air and in water, or making a toy theatre in the art rooms, are much more individually and pleasantly engaged. It will be found an interesting variation to ask pupils, even in an object lesson, to *write down* the answers to some of the questions on paper, just as in a history oral lesson the teacher with advanced pupils expects them to take notes, and pauses at appropriate stages to enable them to do so. Such a plan, simple as it is, does a little to change the attitude of a class, it does *bring them all in*. It is, of course, an admirable plan that the object discussed shall be duplicated so that each may examine it, although one has known at least one lesson tragedy when the selected object was a shrimp!

It is well worthy of experiment to discover how far oral lessons as such are retained in the memory of pupils. Can we learn by the ear as effectively as by the eye? The

B B C are now combining oral work with most illuminating handbooks. Real object lessons which appeal to ear, eye, and hand are, of course, admirable, but is not a great deal of time wasted on the oral instruction plan which is a kind of scholastic broadcasting? How much remains at the end of a day or a week or a year of the oral lesson on the Nile or Napoleon or the jumps of the Grand National, even with so-called sketch maps and blackboard illustrations? We should get a shock, I believe, if we knew how much carefully prepared talk is absolutely thrown away. The only reason for the undue prominence given to oral work is the absence of facility for other methods, e.g. provision of books of ready reference, workrooms, classes of reasonable dimensions, especially the want of elasticity of accommodation which keeps children penned up in their seats all day long. This is being from day to day modified by local authorities. Baths and playgrounds, woodwork centres and central halls and gymnasia, are increasing. The writer hopes yet to see the pupils of the primary schools going to school with their own sets of books in their satchels. He is

an incorrigible optimist, but the Consultative Committee of the Board of Education are facing the problem, and something is certain to be done in this direction very soon. We cannot afford to be the only civilized nation in the world which does not see to it that our children in the primary schools are in personal possession of adequate text-books.

The Dalton plan has many friends and does at least insist on the pupil doing his work, preparing his allotments, mainly by reading. It is supported by some people on the grounds of economy. A few books of each kind may be used *in turn* by many pupils. It would be more in accordance with the British High School tradition that in any class the whole of the pupils were using for their work the sets of books considered by their teachers as most useful.

There is, of course, a place for oral instruction. After adequate private preparation nothing can be more exhilarating than an oral lesson which focuses and emphasizes the various points of a piece of work and takes the whole class along together. It is a joy to see a teacher with a mastery of his technique, shepherding his pupils in the path



of a discovery lesson (heuristic method) like the clever dog in the sheep-dog trials who induces the sheep on the fell side to finish their exciting journeys in the competition pens. The dog sets the sheep moving. Then he lies down at the critical place where the sheep might wish to go wrong. The sheep realize that this particular direction is barred and, by what might inaccurately be termed their "own will", take another discovery trip which happens to be the one which the dog has planned.

An interesting form of object lesson is one in which the teacher sets himself to enable the class to reinvent, let us say, the spring balance or the decimal point, or square measure or algebra, so far as using letters for unknown numbers may be considered as its foundation. It is obvious that in such lessons the "sheep-dog trial" method may be widely used. Suggestions from the class which help must be readily taken, and the class headed off from suggestions which would not be useful in the quest. Uncontrolled suggestions would imply unlimited time and the time-factor is important. The children do, indeed, discover, but the teacher's

planning must be so skilful and adequate that the path of discovery is not too difficult. But it will be found such a quest exhilarates them and the discovery gives great pleasure. They are like the dogs in electric hare coursing—they have all the joy of the chase and do not realize how much of it is due to scientific prearrangement.

If an illustration from actual practice may be allowed, a lesson on the discovery of algebra might proceed on the following lines. The pupils are each provided with a piece of paper and a pencil. The teacher has a bag of marbles or set of cubes, and a blackboard and chalk. He takes, let us say, two marbles from the bag, puts them into one hand, and takes another marble from the bag and adds it to the two in the hand. He then asks the class to write down on their papers what he has done, using any signs they know—pupils' work is in square brackets— $[2 + 1 = 3]$ . He asks to see the result and writes the correct one on his blackboard. A series of similar operations is treated briskly in the same way.  $[2 + 3 = 5, 4 + 5 = 9, 4 - 1 = 3, 5 - 4 = 1]$ . This is the first stage of the lesson. The teacher's trans-

actions with the objects are observed by the class and reduced to statements by them. They have noted carefully what he does, and the work asked of them has been comparatively easy. In the next stage of the lesson the teacher introduces the idea of an *unknown or secret number*. He takes out secretly a number of marbles from the bag and then adds to these another marble. He asks the class to write a statement of what he has now done [ $\text{secret number} + 1 = \text{answer unknown}$ ]. Another example, "A secret number of marbles is in my closed hand, I take one away, write down what has occurred." [ $\text{Secret number} - 1 = ?$ ]. Another example "A secret number of marbles is in this hand, and the same number of marbles is in the other hand, what have I now?" [ $\text{Twice the secret number or secret number multiplied by 2} = ?$ ]. Another question "If I now add two more marbles, write down the result." This is a difficult stage and the right answer would be most welcome here. [ $\text{Twice the secret number} + 2 = ?$ ]. Then we may let the cat out of the bag and say what the secret number has been in these four cases we have been concerned with.

The class will readily fill up the queries. New examples may follow on the same lines with the final number disclosed, e.g. "John has a certain number of marbles. Tom has twice as many. Together they have thirty. How many has John?" [Three times the secret number = 30] "John has a certain number of pennies. Tom has twice as many and another penny." [Three times the secret number + 1 = 31] When this lesson was being given an attempt was made to use ages as secret numbers, but it was found that ages of pupils are not secret. The lesson may at this stage be regarded as safely on its way. The class is at this time a little tired of writing "secret numbers." The critical stage is now reached where it is hoped that a letter may be suggested by the class in place of a secret or unknown number. It is suggested that the quickest way towards this discovery is by the introduction of *two* unknown numbers, one of which has to be distinguished from the other. The lesson proceeds "John has a money-box containing pennies. His father promises to give him at Christmas twice as many pennies as he has saved and a penny more. Write down what

John gets at Christmas " [Three times the unknown number  $+ 1 = ?$  ] A number of such examples and solutions may follow. Then this example " John's brother Tom also has a money-box containing pennies, and his father promises Tom that he will give him twice his unknown number of pennies (which are not the same as John's) and a penny more. How much have they both together?" Some members of the class suggest [Six times the unknown number  $+ 2$ ], but to the teacher's joy one mathematically minded pupil says emphatically " Oh, that won't do at all, the *unknown numbers are not the same!*" This is most encouraging. You are now what children call " very warm " in the finding game. You have to ask now for some method of distinguishing between one set of unknown numbers and the other in the two money boxes. In the actual lesson of which these are notes, A and B were suggested. That this lesson was a real discovery is indeed proved by the letters A and B being selected and not X and Y, which are the usual letters of algebra. There is no need to spoil the discovery by mentioning algebra at all, and certainly you will

not think of referring to simple equations on which the lesson is obviously based. There is plenty of experiment and fun in a lesson of this sort. It is not intended to be a model lesson in mathematics, but an attempt to give young children the opportunity which some Arab mathematician took many centuries ago of *discovering the function of the literal symbol*.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE TYRANNY OF CAST IRON ADMINISTRATION

The teacher "skilled to rule" in his own domain takes very unkindly to interference. Even the most rigid disciplinarian objects to cast-iron administration. The ablest and most successful directors of education are those who inspire most confidence in their colleagues on the teaching staffs. The relative order of importance in the actual work of teaching is class teacher, head teacher, administrator. There must be peace and happiness in the classroom, the school, and the office, if the best results are to be obtained. It is quite possible for a director to command affection as well as demand respect.

It is mainly a question of humanity. Directly the control of the teacher becomes soulless and mechanical it becomes a tyranny—a hindrance, not a help. Teachers have many heavy responsibilities. They are near

to sad cases of wrongdoing and failure, the strain on their emotional nature is great and continuous. They have "most need of blessing", and yet the greatest strain of all comes from those who should understand them and help them. Think of the frame of mind of the teacher who, called to the deathbed of a parent, returns to work to find that he has been "docked" two days' pay. This is no imaginary case, although it is an unusually bad one.

Mrs. Millicent MacKenzie, in her interesting *Freedom in Education* lays very strong stress on this point. "The time, money, and energy expended on trying to secure that no halfpenny of rates and taxes allocated to education is lost or misapplied and that all the official red tape is complied with, would go far to secure the admittedly necessary reforms in education. Can we wonder that those who would make the best teachers, those in whom the spirit of the creative artist lives who want to give rather than get, to work for the joy of working, to live in and for the children, are often repelled by what they see of the conditions of ordinary school-work and prefer instead to throw themselves



into any other field of activity that appears to offer them the scope they need? It may be asked why it is that Settlement and other forms of social activity in poorer districts are felt to be more attractive than school teaching. The answer is partly to be found in the freedom and sense of adventure, the scope for originality and initiative which characterize this kind of social endeavour and which seem to be conspicuous by their absence in ordinary school work."

And red tape goes farther than tying up individual teachers. It strangles schools as well. If schemes of reorganization are outlined and carried through against the dearest wishes of teachers, parents, and even managers—whose title is surely given them because they have so little power of management!—there is always the danger that administration, in playing its chess game, will take no notice of the poor pawns, but move them to and fro or even "exchange" them without a sigh. In the department of Secondary Education an attempt was made some years ago by the officers of national administration to develop certain older collegiate institutions by taking

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away from the newer Secondary Schools their sixth-form pupils to form advanced courses at the older schools. There may be just the same absence of consideration in the reconstruction of Higher Education from the age of 11 plus in the newer Central School system. The *area* is the first consideration, the local *school* doesn't matter. Schemes which look well on paper may some day cause sufficient irritation to produce a revolution. A school is a living thing, and has a heart and a conscience—sometimes even a reputation. It is the great administrators who recognize this and are proud of the variety and individuality of the schools they direct. Others are proud of their *schemes*!

Where schemes accumulate there will be a steady demand for statistics which are the raw material from which schemes are manufactured—the wood pulp in the artificial silk. These have usually to be supplied by teachers. In the more generous arrangements for Secondary Schools the hunger for statistics is assuaged by an assistant to the headmaster or headmistress for this purpose—a school secretary—although in a recent debate a local mayor declared cheerfully. It was not neces-

sary for headmasters and headmistresses to have secretaries. The time had come *when headmasters and headmistresses must work!*" He thought 'they ought to do their secretarial work themselves in their leisure time. He understood they had no classes to teach and had only to supervise. A little secretarial work would keep their hand in.' The mayor's millennium has unfortunately already arrived in Elementary Schools. Here the head teachers have to do their best either out of school hours or by neglecting the practical and professional side of their work for secretarial performances. Then the Government has at times a deep curiosity as to the number of pupils over thirteen who are being taught Latin or woodwork. After filling up forms for a considerable portion of his day one wonders whether a headmaster does not go home and ask his wife the average amount of bread or meat consumed by the family (a) in Lent (b) in ordinary times and (c) on holidays. He has become a fixed member of the society for the promotion of useless knowledge! Who does not execrate the memory of the wretch who invented the *questionnaire*? No wonder that, like other

shady words, it hides in French. The craze for statistics is a ruling passion with some officials. There is a story of the College head of Cambridge whose last words before death were "Bring me the Calendar."

Then, again, some administrative people who mean well treat their staffs as not knowing their own particular jobs. They give them directions and instructions—how to start a penny bank, or what to say on Empire Day, or how best and when to teach decimal fractions. It is in the United States of America, the land of freedom, that the school superintendent has most power and the teacher the least. In American states it is usual for the teachers to be assembled on Saturday morning so that the teaching notes for the following week's work can be dictated to them!

It should not, however, be forgotten that the headmaster himself has administrative duties with regard to his colleagues. It is not always that the difficulties of a school are solely in relation to the 'office'. There may be an office inside the school. It is all the more imperative, therefore, that we who claim freedom should grant it. Our col

leagues must not be burdened by our own unnecessary statistics or local red tape. We should not manufacture little books of method or issue orders by handbills or circulars. There may be a professional "beam" in our own eye which prevents our ophthalmic judgments of others having sincerity or usefulness. It is said that in the East if the camel driver is snubbed by his master he kicks his camel. This is remarkably hard on the camel, even though he were what he is probably not.

Meek and mild,  
And docile as a little child".

A fable may be found in this too.

It is certainly the view of teachers that there is often an unnecessary multiplication of administrative officials. There must be machinery in this as in other work, but it is only good in relation to the work for which it is called into being. Officials and teachers alike only exist for the sake of the children who are being educated. There is a clear difference of function between teaching and administration. The policeman who directs the traffic is not called upon to drive the

buses It might occasionally be of advantage to compare the office arrangement of a Local Education Authority with those, let us say, in an important engineering firm who build bridges and construct dams In such a firm, every detail of office expenditure and energy is reduced to the point at which it can be proved to serve best the firm's main purpose, viz that of *engineering construction* It does not follow that all unnecessary work in administration is produced by the officials Education officials have their own difficulties, and since they have many masters to serve it may be they become more syndicate than sinning!



## CHAPTER VIII

### THE TYRANNY OF CLICHÉS

It is often easier to quote than to think, and the banal commonplaces of education pass among the *hoi polloi* not seldom for "confirmation strong as holy writ." There is the "Newer Education"—as there always has been. There are also—terribly active and novel—"self-determination" and "self-expression" and "auto-education", which all seem to be plans for dealing with children without a teacher, but which merely imply a change of view as to the teacher's work, and a method which makes greater demands on him than did "class teaching." There is in a resurrected Rousseau philosophy the "individualistic school of psychology" which regards the "social psychology" of the community or class with suspicion. All will be well when the child chooses his own lessons, goes to what classroom or laboratory pleases

him, has a teacher for a book of reference, develops his own "personality", and is removed from the "leading strings" of his mother, the "authority" of his father, or the "leadership" of his teacher! No one will in the days of this new education dare to speak *ex cathedra*. He will only venture to leave some mild literature where it may be discovered and possibly noted. Just as the really clever teacher will no longer teach children to read, but will arrange that they find out their letters for themselves. *Esprit de corps* will necessarily vanish so one *cliche* will destroy another, even in a different language. There will be no "tyranny of the social group" killing the "free personality" of the children possessing their own directing activity.

A "practical bias" will be given to the education in the Elementary School. Perhaps the future plumber will have special lessons in making out bills in which a boy's time is a certain fraction of that of the adult practitioner when both are walking to the job. The future tram guard will study "phonetics" so that he may say in Lancashire "Fares, please!" and not be mistaken for a furrier.

It would be unfortunate, however, if the bias got on the wrong thing. It might be awkward if you set the future dairyman problems about the chemistry of lime-clouded water, or set the farm labourers in Norfolk sums involving an acquaintance with whippet racing. Any reference in what is called the "unity method", to one man "building a wall", might be open to professional objections, although if he were only working one hour a day his loneliness might be overlooked. Future sailors might easily be taught rope-climbing, and future colliers take some of their lessons in cellars. Should vocational bias be extended to more advanced forms of education, medical students might attend preliminary inquests and foreign language experts in training be induced to take up golf.

The teacher is said to be in relation to the pupil *in loco parentis*, and this trite saying is held to cover a multitude of absurdities. It is obviously not the teacher's duty to house or clothe the pupil except as the parent's agent and on terms of a contract. The pupil's view is aptly explained in *Stalky & Co*. It is that the schoolmaster takes over all the more disagreeable matters relating to parental

control. In a day school interesting problems arise. Has a schoolmaster the right to interfere with the parent's authority in such a case as smoking at home or the wearing of an overcoat in the public streets at night—where school rules prohibit such things? An eminent barrister expresses the view, quite vague enough to be “legal”, that although, in the accepted sense, the proper application of a general rule to any specific set of facts cannot be guaranteed, yet, “whilst a boy remains part of the family or community forming the school, the headmaster's disciplinary powers are exercisable for all purposes necessary to maintain the welfare of the community and achieve its objects”—what ever that means, but the point at which the parent resumes responsibility for his child and ousts the headmaster's control is, all the same, difficult to determine. Common sense would suggest that in day schools at any rate no attempt should be made to act as if the commission *in loco parentis* were capable of infinite extension. Surely parents and teachers are partners in the work of education and are jointly responsible so that school and home should not be in opposition. There

are, otherwise, dangers of tyranny from either side. A headmaster who punishes a boy for obeying his parents on the ground that he, the headmaster, has an "over-riding authority" is acting against public opinion and bringing scholastic authority into ill repute. A parent who connives at a boy's breaking of what is called "merely a school rule" is weakening the school authority and putting his boy into a false position.

One hears very often these days of "the chance of a lifetime." It means that a boy under obligation to attend school has heard of a job and his parent, despite his undertaking to the school, in many cases in the form of a stamped agreement, wants to withdraw the pupil. So he puts up the defence that (1) the circumstances have changed since he signed the undertaking, he cannot afford to keep the boy any longer at school, (2) that the boy is tired of school, or is making no useful progress, and has, in fact, "learned enough"—a pretty general parents' *cliche*, and (3) that this particular opening is of such a nature that it is never likely to recur. If the boy, therefore, misses this "chance of a lifetime" he is like the one who, having failed

to take the "tide in the affairs of men" that leads to fortune, will be bound in shallows and in miseries and lose his ventures. So the boy is withdrawn on the eve of a school certificate examination or just when he is about to sit for a University scholarship—sometimes when he has in fact gained one—and goes to the bank or insurance office which has such immediate attractions. If the coincidence were that a particular job for which the boy's gifts were obvious and peculiar happened to fall vacant just as a boy was in doubt about the advisability of remaining longer at school this might cause a really interesting problem to arise, and the whole circumstances might very reasonably be considered, but the job which is so much desired is in most cases one for which the pupil is not especially gifted and the arguments for the withdrawal are usually economic rather than psychological, although there is always a danger of meeting the *cliche*, the "psychological moment"

The parent who asked that his boy should be withdrawn from scripture teaching as it would be "no use to him in his future life" is legendary, but many parents wish to

improve a boy's chances by narrowing his curriculum. We are accustomed to be told that certain subjects are of "no use." Why bother a bank clerk with Latin, or an accountant with woodwork? This is the crude form in which the case is put from a narrow point of view as to the content of education. Most of us believe firmly that the harmonious development of both the introverted and extraverted is the key to success in teaching, that there is a "thinking hand", and that school often gives to those in a sedentary profession the joy of practical hobbies, e.g. photography, field botany, art, and music. If school opens the windows of consciousness and gives magic casements, it does so much more than promote specialized efficiency. Besides, where the school practises many ways of approach it makes completer appeal to varying personalities. It "catches capacities" of all kinds. It is the wide curriculum that becomes, in the end, the most technically efficient. It is the schools that take Botany and Zoology, as well as Chemistry and Physics, which give a chance for science to extend its boundaries. Those who try to save their educational souls by curriculum

The chaplain of a prison once told me that the greatest joy a convict had was the letter from his mother. "The mother always writes," he said, "and when no letter comes we know that she is dead. Then it is our sad lot to tell the poor convict that he has lost the one person who believed in him and loved him in spite of all." Truly did Tobit charge his son: "My son, despise not thy mother. honour her all the days of thy life and grieve her not. Remember, my child, that she hath seen many dangers for thee."

The mother is too partial to be a judge of her son's attainments or abilities. She is quite prepared, if necessary, to deceive you as to these, since she has no doubt already deceived herself in this connexion. If you are examining her boy for entrance and she is present, she will, if she can, give him a hint as to the right answer. Or if he fails she says immediately that he is nervous, or sick, or was absent from his last school when they taught him the money tables! You will probably always find it wise to conduct your detailed examination of the boy in her absence.

My quaintest experience was that of a mother who told me that she had had her



son's head "read" by a phrenologist. I was interested in this statement and asked if the phrenologist had made any useful suggestions. She said that he had told her one very important thing. The boy, he had declared, was of such a mental disposition that if ever he got into trouble at school it would always be *through someone else*, and she accordingly urged me, if he got into a scrape, to seek for *the other boy!* I have often wondered who was the cleverer, the phrenologist or the mother. *Cherchez l'autre!* is still the mother's cry all the world over.

The ordinary parent who may have an extraordinary son finds out sometimes that his son's disposition, his talents, his weaknesses are very like what his own were. No one who has had experience in teaching can deny the force of heredity. Environment may explain much, but heredity always more. It is still true that when the fathers have tasted sour grapes the children's teeth are set on edge. Heredity is so simple an explanation that it is often overlooked. I have myself often stumbled across it quite by accident. I remember one case where a boy's pocket-knife had been used several times on school

## CHAPTER IX

### THE TYRANNY OF PARENTS

School is a co-operative venture—pupils, teachers, officials, parents. The pupils are, of course, although this fact may be occasionally forgotten, the most important part of the concern. School exists for them and not they for school. It is the parents who send them to school. If it is permitted to those keeping school to discover the special capacities of the pupils, to give opportunities, encouragement, direction, so much the better, but that schools afford opportunities, careers, and successes for teachers is of secondary importance to pupils and parents. When this is accepted the parent's relation to the teacher is certain to be friendly. The teacher is the parent's ally. He is often regarded almost as a distant relation to the family. Tom and Tom's teacher are both in the thoughts and speech of Tom's parents.

As a rule it is the mother who acts as the mouthpiece of the family. She decides on the school, interviews the headmaster, writes the notes of excuse for omitted homework, and brings along the father when it is necessary that she should be supported. Of course it is not so easy for the father to visit school during school hours, but even when arrangements are made to interview parents at night it is still found that this work is mainly in the hands of the mother. Men are always willing to let their wives do the detailed jobs and especially to "look after the children." So as a rule it is with the mother that the teacher is mainly concerned. It was Sir John McClure who declared that by a wise provision of Providence no boy had more than *one* mother! I have always found mothers anxious to help, so long as by helping you and the school they are not acting against the interests, as they conceive them, of their children. They know that children are occasionally naughty, only they will insist that their children are not naughtier than others. It is a mother's unreasonable belief in the future of her child which is the child's greatest gift. He has one friend always—his mother

manners often lose them. The school play may be more really educational than the latest technical text-book. We must provide the "painted window and the storied wall" as well as the salts and acids, as Robert Louis Stevenson tells us. "It will never be any good to him" is often as false in prophecy as it is shortsighted in policy. It is the impossible that must be attempted, as it is the remote that is ultimately most valuable. "Education is not as thorough as it was when I was a boy," is the despairing cry of the *laudatores temporis acti*, who are always with us and who write to the local papers letters signed "Viator", or "Mother of Seven", complaining of defective handwriting or arithmetical weakness. Yet young Captain Lindbergh flies the Atlantic. How this must make the fossils "furiously to think."

Nor should we forget of tyrant phrases our friends the "team spirit", and the "Waterloo won on Eton playing fields", although, as we have said, the very newest psychology is individualistic, and it is probable that the game played at Eton in the early days was *cricket*. Let us revive a few *chic*s of our own day. The *club room*, the *cricket*

the State ", " The rich boy of poor education we know, the newer product is the poor boy of rich education " But enough of these educational stereotypes We must " learn by doing ", not by quoting! And yet we may add:

" Of course, there 's nothing new beneath the sun,  
Nor many notions not yet overdone  
But it 's a task for talent given to few  
To make a *cliché* look like coined anew "

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property, and when the lids of several desks had been rough hewn by one "mischievous", as we thought him, boy. The boy's father was sent for and the damage disclosed. The father had no suggestions to offer. The boy had done this out of wantonness, "wants a good thrashing"—usual way out of a problem of conduct—"never heard of such a thing." "You have my full permission to deal with it." I made a wild shot. "Have any of your family been wood carvers?" The answer of the Liverpool clerk was extraordinary. "Oh, yes, now that you mention it. My father and his father before him were both wood-carvers and did much of the woodwork in the restoration of — Cathedral." The suggestion made on the strength of this knowledge was the obvious one, and the milieu of the carving operation was changed.

I have interviewed a father whose son was a truant, and when I asked the unexpected question, "What were you like at his age?" had the pitiful reply, "Oh, don't ask me, sir! I never could rest anywhere. I ran away from home, joined the army, left the army, went to sea, and had been twice round the world before I was twenty!" The wanderlust

of the father had evidently passed to the son, for our cause of complaint was he had been absent from school and had been discovered in Manchester selling newspapers for a living. It was in this case that the safety-valve method, or the "day-off" treatment, was tried with success. The boy was promised an *exeat*, a day off once a month on condition that he attended for the rest of the time quite regularly. This arrangement was agreed to by the father and quite honourably maintained by the boy. Is not the "grace term" an expansion of the "day-off" principle? Is there not often a wish to truant in the hearts of the teachers themselves?

Incidentally one may remark that widows who have children in attendance at your school have a great capacity for absorbing advice as to their children's future. Widows seem to consult all the men with whom they come officially into contact—clergymen, lawyers, bank managers, and schoolmasters, and one imagines that they consult them all several times.

At times one has found that parents would like to make alterations in the school curriculum. They wish that there should be

greater elasticity in it. They believe in specific training. If they have finally made up their minds that their sons should go into commerce the time spent on other than commercial subjects is sometimes grudged. They are not really in favour of a good general education, since they will challenge the utility of any special subject. They want their boy to "drop" Latin, or Art, or Woodwork, or even Scripture. Their view is too short. One can well understand that in American High Schools where subjects may be taken for a single term there is breadth without intensity, or what Dr. Learned calls a "sausaging of information"—typewriting, stenography, journalism, and Red Cross work being accepted as subjects for a few weeks' work and gaining "credits" for graduation to the University.

A headmaster of an English Second School has very often to combat these tendencies which in America have produced "breadth" rather than depth. He has the nice problem of giving some options—in the main the contrast is between literary and scientific subjects—and at the same time insisting on a reasonable standard of proficiency. It may occasionally happen that a

pupil who has been placed on the Arts side and has worked for some years at a subject such as Latin does in fact "drop" the subject, but as a rule the English method is to take in school only such subjects as are worthy of full development and to bring each subject into as full a growth as the school course permits. We are not likely for some years to come, despite pressure from short-sighted parents, to think of the curriculum as a series of short courses. It may be that some experiments in this particular field would be useful. We hear of freedom in education, and that both the teacher and the child should be free. How far should the child be free to make choice of subjects at an age when he is most likely to err? Should the pupil who is backward in, say, Mathematics be allowed at an early age to say good-bye to Arithmetic, Algebra, and Geometry?

A sound method, however, to pursue is to find out the subjects in which a pupil excels, to encourage and develop them by all possible ways, to keep a record of the child's school successes in order that a suitable career after school life may be undertaken. This finding a career for the pupils brings parent

and teacher into close co operation The parent has a right to ask the teacher for such a report on the pupil's work as will indicate the direction, if any, in which the pupil is likely to be successful One is bound to confess that such a record is not, in many cases, the principal source of guidance to the parent The parent is often unwilling to attach sufficient importance to the verdict of the school He is especially apt to demur if the school report suggests an artistic career for his boy He thinks drawing and music are matters of recreation He probably knows a bank manager who will give his son an extraordinarily favourable chance of spending his life in dealing with figures, for which the boy has a loathing I remember one case in which, despite the school report and my eloquent advice, an artist boy was sent to an insurance company to draw sketches of irate managers on his blotting-pad and finally to be asked to leave The father, feeling that, as commerce seemed hopeless, perhaps the headmaster was right about Art, sent the boy to the University School of Architecture and he became a *Prix de Rome* scholar and an architect of national importance

One must also draw attention to another weakness of parents. They are often so anxious to get their boys placed in the world that in these days of keen competition and bad trade they jump at the chance of a boy's appointment to a business house before the boy has had time to complete satisfactorily his school career. When the boy is nearing 16 years of age they are alert, and if the boy is intelligent and, in fact, is a boy of that class of brain which would make most use of higher education, they see in the first opening which is presented the "chance of a lifetime." I have had parents refuse to allow their boys to take up University Scholarships which they had gained in open competition, and which had adequate maintenance grants added, merely in order to gain a post with a corporation like the Dock Board because the career seemed safer. "Safety first" is a deadly cry with regard to a boy's career. The surprising fact in connexion with University education is that, despite all the disadvantages of diminished trade, in the matter of employment there is, in all kinds of jobs, room at the top. Very few indeed of the boys who have gained a

good school certificate fail to obtain employment, and the percentage of boys with a *University* education who are out of work is negligible. Faith in the system is justified by the results. Many times have I heard parents bitterly regret that they had not been braver—less anxious to take the shortest and easiest way. Are we not advised that wisdom is won by waiting, and asked to “come to her as one that ploweth and soweth and wait for her good fruits”?



## CHAPTER X

### THE TYRANNY OF SOCIETIES

There is scarcely an existing society which does not do its best to enrol the teachers amongst its members. Quite a lot of people each term offer to lend us money "on note of hand only", but still more invite us to part with our own money to support worthy causes. Few have any idea how ridiculous would be the result if we did not set a stern limit to ourselves. Our salaries literally would not pay our annual subscriptions. There are, first of all, the general professional societies, such as the Educational Institute in Scotland or the National Union of Teachers, which open their doors to all classes of teachers. Then Head Teachers are invited to belong to the Head Teachers' Association, which is, of course, a sectional specialized society just as is the Incorporated Association of Assistant Mistresses in Secondary Schools. There

are many professional societies claiming the attentions of the e anxious to make the unity of the teaching world a reality. The idealist who joins several professional societies has at least the courage of his subscriptions!

A strong sectional feeling and a strict sense of economy will, however, go far in restraining enthusiasm for a teaching brotherhood or any other visionary project. The headmaster of a Secondary School who actually pays a subscription so that he may join hands with his fellow-workers in Elementary Schools is probably in danger of being accused of searching for unity at the expense of prudence. It is, of course, much cheaper to be aloof! Detachment has also the advantage of an apparently undivided allegiance to one particular set. But unless we can somehow contrive, in the training of teachers, and in the association of teachers afterwards, to keep alive a sense of unity of effort, a common inspiration, and a helpful *camaraderie*, much of our talk about education will be as sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal. There is a great temptation to preach love and to practise hatred, to talk of unity and to be disgusted, or at least disquieted, at its approach.

Many of the 'diehards' really wish for class distinctions privilege, caste, and all the host of invisible things that divide one set of people from another. But the unity of teaching is being brought about by other societies than those we have termed "professional" in a strict sense.

There is the Teachers' Registration Council, which declares that "unity is the first condition of progress towards a larger measure of self government for teachers, and this self government in its turn begins when teachers themselves have under their control a register of those qualified to practise their calling", and which has achieved a list of recognized teachers of which it may be said that at any rate it excludes many who would be glad to have whatever honour its membership bestows. It is a symbol of unity. It is a single list of teachers of many grades. It does not examine candidates, it does not attempt to add to the professional education these may receive in other ways. It has no organ, and, indeed, no tunes to grind. It might, conceivably, become a College of Teachers and the instrument by which entry to teaching was itself guarded by teachers.

The real supporters of professional unity of to day are the various "subject" associations—those societies which aim at the advance in education of the particular subjects they are concerned with. The Classical Association is always successful in securing for its President a man of real distinction, sometimes a professor and sometimes a Prime Minister, and although it appeals in the main to teachers whose early training has been on broad and generous lines it links up classical literature, archæology, and art with modern letters. It is keeping alive in the schools the study of Greek, and strengthening that of Latin. Its leaders are scholars and its appeal is wider than its title would suggest. Then the English Association makes a really valiant effort to secure the interest of all sorts and conditions of teachers. The teachers in the Primary Schools are fully alive to the inspiration their work receives from their contact with English men of letters. Sir Henry Newbolt has been a great leader of professional unity as well as a most successful missionary in establishing and confirming the branches of this Association. Liverpool alone, mainly through his efforts and the encourage-

ment of two sparkling addresses, has over a thousand members in its branch, and the interesting thing is that these members include teachers of all grades of schools, administrators, inspectors, as well as some few members of the general public who are, as might be expected, more concerned with the study of literature than the teaching of it. So great is the attraction of the subject in these days that it is the English Association which approaches most nearly to a working branch of a National College of Education. After all, books show the way

They give new views of life and teach us how to live,  
They soothe the grieved the stubborn they chastise  
Fools they admonish and confirm the wise

Perhaps after all there is something in our English indirect way of doing things. Call a meeting to discuss professional reunion and you will meet half a dozen people with a zeal temperature of below zero. Get Mr Chesterton to lecture on 'Penny Dreadfuls' and all kinds of teachers will rush to show how near to each of them is the romantic literature. After all, Mr Chesterton himself shows how ridiculous we are in our classifications. "The philanthropist can never forget classes and

callings. He says with a modest swagger 'I have invited twenty five factory hands to tea'. If he said 'I have invited twenty-five chartered accountants to tea' everyone would see the humour of so simple a classification." Perhaps, as Mr. Spender said long ago, we need a word which shall express the *opposite* of education—a word to denote that turning in of the mind on itself—that closing of doors upon speculation, that hardening of the mental tissues which is the special bias of the so-called 'educated', and it may be that we shall find in these subject societies some emancipation from professional routine and the other idols of the cave.

But what of the hundreds of other societies aiming at national health, or broadcasting, or family endowment, or the League of Nations, or friendship with America, or national playing-fields, or industrial psychology—in all of which a teacher is likely to be interested? How can any individual teacher keep in contact with the societies which desire his influence and subscriptions? It is here that the scholastic press is most useful or is capable of so being. There is likely to be considerable advance along this line of

co-operation for the national good, and the Press can help much in this direction. We want to know how the general advance of science may help our work, and the papers read at the British Association meetings should reach the teachers and the schools. On one occasion, at least, copies of the papers were sent to the Secondary Schools in the locality where the Association meeting was held. The scholastic Press should be keen to give us an intelligent summary of the year's advance in science. The Education section of the meeting has always seemed to be something apart from the main business of the conference. Any interest taken in it has been interest in the person speaking. On the other hand the work of the Psychological section has been of continuous and increasing professional interest. *Indeed, it is the association of education with experimental psychology which has given opportunity for modern educational experiments, and the entire change of attitude of the average teacher towards such subjects as fatigue or suggestion shows how much teaching owes to modern science. A teacher should join some psychological association. I believe*

my own subscription to a local society is in arrear

The most attractive of all the societies angling for the teachers are those which promise him happiness and freedom and a new programme. These societies are mainly run by teachers whose position outside a national scheme makes them more generous in such offers than most of us can afford to be. People with sufficient capital to establish expensive private schools may have never notions of discipline and better opportunities of promoting liberty. But we are all interested in educational inquiry and research, and freedom is essential to educational happiness. One regrets that the assistant masters and mistresses, especially in the Elementary Schools, are too often not consulted sufficiently about their work and plans or allowed liberty to be truly intelligent craftsmen. This is probably the result of our having had, in the past for small schools only one well-qualified teacher, the head teacher, and a number of monitors or pupil teachers, or uncertificated assistant teachers. The classrooms with glass partitions and doors which bring pupils and teachers under the supervision of head teachers of



the department, suggesting the *panopticon* arrangement of a prison with the prisoners separated out and each of them visible to the central warden—such arrangements are the heritage of an outworn ideal. If the Freedom Club will abolish this system and give us all a private classroom for each teacher let us try to join it! I should dearly like to mention the freak societies I have been invited to join, but I hold a public appointment and perhaps I have been already sufficiently indiscreet.

## CHAPTER XI

### THE TYRANNY OF SCHOOL APPARATUS AND EQUIPMENT

It was Rousseau who so firmly held that over-elaboration of apparatus was the enemy of experiment. "The scientific atmosphere kills science," he declared. *Emile* was to have but the simplest forms of home-made apparatus; indeed the beginnings of magnetism were, one recollects, associated with the toy ducks of the juggler at the fair and the magnetic field discovered by the pupil himself—an early example of that most excellent plan known as the Heuristic method!

We should ask with regard to any particular piece of apparatus who or what wants this apparatus—the subject, the teacher, or the pupil? What will be its relation to the acquisition of knowledge, to mental effort, to pleasure, to enlightenment, to an interest which will develop? The supreme test of

the need of apparatus is, will it or will it not increase the creative activity of the pupil? In other words, is it a help or a hindrance?

With regard to the primary school, there is the strongest ground for advocating a great advance in the provision of books as instruments of the pupils' auto education. Books are the silent teachers. Many of the talkers could learn a little from their silent brethren. Teachers do not like them always 'show to subjects what they show to kings', nor do books give messages as from a superior to an inferior. Many an inferiority complex in a poor boy has been removed by a gracious book.

If you examine such books as are now in use in the modern secondary school you will find that they are written by authors of repute, well printed, suitably illustrated and strongly bound. Each pupil keeps his own set in locker or satchel. The books are clean and carefully looked after. They are used each day—practically each lesson. The dictionary, the atlas, and other reference books are the ordinary working tools of the pupil. He is required to look up information for himself, to verify references, to read and obtain before-

hand the material on which subsequent oral lessons are to be given. He and his teacher both regard books as indispensable. All teaching methods in the secondary school presuppose the use of books. As the pupil advances in the school, his school books become more authoritative. He has standard works at his disposal. When he leaves school he has collected the beginning of a home library of good books.

If you turn from this picture to another one and ask what is being done for the pupils of the elementary schools you will be distressed by the contrast. A certain number of school readers are at the disposal of the children for class purposes. These books are given out from cupboards where they are stored. At the close of a lesson they are collected and put back again into the store cupboards. The children are not trained to the individual use of books, and may not take the actual books home. A miserable amount of money is spent by the Local Education Authorities on such books. For instance in the case of one authority, in most matters enlightened and progressive, where the total expenditure on elementary education is nearly

a million and a half pounds a year, of this sum only ten thousand pounds is spent on school books. This works out at *one shilling and sevenpence* per pupil, and the figures since 1920 make the average expenditure of five years just over *one shilling and threepence* per head. You might put it this way, that in the case of this particular authority the cost to the rates of the books of the elementary school pupils is *one-fifth of a penny in the pound*. One is reminded of the criticism of Falstaff's bill, "O monstrous! But one halfpennyworth of bread to this intolerable deal of sack!"

In many cases the statistics do not show what is spent on books alone, books are grouped with apparatus, stationery, and furniture. But, surely, books are of sufficient importance to be separately considered.

The plan adopted by some authorities of referring all new books to a special Books Committee, who decide which books shall be placed on the official list and which shall not, has much to be said against it. It causes unnecessary delay in the adoption of suitable new books. It destroys the interest of individual head teachers in a matter of con-

siderable professional importance, viz the production of new books. It could only be justified if head teachers were not efficient, or were not to be trusted—in which case they ought not to have been appointed. I strongly advocate a free and open market for school books, believing that competition in this matter is healthy, even if a publisher does occasionally let admiration of a rival's goods develop into appropriation of his ideas. I have never found the visit of a publisher's representative anything but a help and an opportunity to my colleagues and myself. A well known county authority recently reports as follows:

‘ During the past year the Committee's officers have given a large amount of attention to the question of school supplies. It has occasionally been found that schools were inadequately provided with stationery, and that reading-books and text books were insufficient in quantity and unsuitable or out of date. Sometimes this has been due to misapprehension on the part of Managers, and to hesitation on the part of Head Teachers who were about to retire, to requisition stocks which might possibly not be exactly what

their successor required. Where previous years' allowances have been underspent for these reasons, supplementary grants have been voted to make up deficiencies. It has been found, however, that the existing scale of allowances is not adequate to provide for the increased demands created by the raising of the school age. The development of more advanced instruction and the introduction of schemes of individual work, the improvement of facilities for practical work throughout the schools and the much *wider conception of the methods of teaching* fundamental subjects (notably English), all tend to produce demands for *larger and more varied stocks of books and apparatus*. The new estimates, therefore, provide for an appreciable increase in the expenditure under this head, the additional sum being allocated in proportion to the number of pupils in the schools over 11 years of age."

May I give you a story which was told to me of a school near London where the Headmaster told the boys of a certain class that they might each bring a book to school to read for a certain period? He noticed that one boy's book was of a peculiar shape and

was bound in brown paper. At the close of the session the Headmaster asked the boy to let him see the book he had brought. The boy blushed and said he didn't like to show it. But the Headmaster, insisting in a friendly way, and assuring the boy that it would be all right whatever the book was, the boy's book turned out to be a *Railway Time Table*, for the poor chap had *no book to bring*, and brought the time-table covered with brown paper, so that the secret of his bookless home should not be revealed! In parenthesis, I may remark that in many homes of rich people the railway time table, if not the only book, is the book most often used!

I have been making inquiries about books in the homes lately at a school in a poor neighbourhood in a large city. Here it was discovered that in the upper or "A" divisions of the classes there were some boys who had a few books at home. These books were not of a particularly helpful kind. Many of them were annuals or children's books, without any permanent literary value. A few stray volumes of Scott and Dickens were also found. But in the second or "B" divisions one was surprised, almost staggered, by the



number of children who came from *bookless homes*. Yet in the school there were great attempts made by the teachers to foster reading, the free libraries were requisitioned, and there were small and very well used school class libraries. The only books going into their homes were, therefore, those lent them by the school or from the library. There were no books at home other than these.

Let us inquire as to what is done about children's books in other countries. In America—although it is not easy to generalize about education there, since each state has its own system—we may say that although elementary and high-school education is free, the pupils are as a rule required to purchase for themselves the books of the official book lists of their grades. In most of the cities, however, there are funds out of which books are bought for necessitous pupils. The Americans believe in making each child look after his own books. They find that it is good training for him to keep them in good condition. This plan further appeals to them as a business proposition. For it is, I grieve to state, usual for the pupils to dispose of their books when they change their grades. The

school text book which goes to the home is used by the parents and is regarded as an important means by which the English language is acquired by immigrants of other nationalities. The text-book Americanizes both pupil and parent.

In France all the books, stationery, exercise books and apparatus required by the children in primary schools are lent to them by the Authorities and when the children leave the school they have to give back their books. In the lycées no books are given, but the pupil may hire from the school for about 30 francs a year the necessary books for his use. There is a generous prize book system for both sets of schools, and the prize books are regarded as the beginning of the pupil's library. In the primary schools each pupil gets a prize book each year—a happy equality to go with the freedom and fraternity of the State. In the lycées some distinction is made but the prize list is still very high—about three out of ten pupils receiving prizes each prize consisting of some eight or ten valuable books. Further, the teachers on leaving the normal schools or training colleges used formerly to receive a small grant

with which to buy books. This plan was suspended during the war, but it is proposed now to re-establish it.

In Germany books are provided for those pupils who are unable to provide them for themselves. Each pupil has control of his own books throughout the session, but they must be kept in good condition and returned to the school at the end of the session.

In Scotland all the pupils have the use of school books and take them home for use there. In some counties books are supplied free, in others the books are merely lent.

*The case of Switzerland is specially interesting.* It is necessary that each child should have his own set of books. In certain cases these books are kept for two years. In other cases more generally used books are supplied to each pupil only once during his school career, but such books may be retained after the school career is completed. While the procedure in each canton varies, from information received from Basel which may be regarded as typical, it appears that each book so supplied has a label in it with certain instructions as given below. The Department of Education in each canton issues

instructions for the providing and checking of these books. A translation of a copy of these instructions is given below.

### SCHOOL BOOK LABEL (BÄTEL)

*School*

Name of Pupil	Class	Received (Date)	Handed in (Date)

Extract from the Regulations concerning the providing of obligatory school books

- (a) The pupils are under an obligation to take every care of the books provided them
- (b) The books are to be provided with protective coverings
- (c) Writing and drawing in the books is forbidden
- (d) The pupil concerned or his legal representative is required to make good any damage or loss
- (e) Every book bears in the inside of the front cover a label on which the pupil has to enter his name, the date of receiving the book, and the date of handing it in

(Signed) The Department for the Administration of Education Appliances [*Die Schulmaterialverwaltung*]

We believe that the books to be used in

our schools should be determined by the heads of the schools concerned in consultation with their colleagues. We should not like the State control to be as vigorous as it is in France, for instance, which has even its universities under State control. The Minister of Education and Fine Arts in France is the chief, and the Director of Higher Education directs and inspects. The Rector is a kind of Education Archbishop. He is Rector of the local university and the local academy as well. That is, he has a double duty. He is the chief officer of the university and he is the executive head of the entire local system from the primary school to the normal school in the district of the academy.

In America the superintendent of schools decides many matters of educational importance which in England are left to the schools themselves. He also uses the wireless to broadcast his judgments. We in this country should regard it as fatal to the unfettered development of education and the freedom of choice of books for individual teachers that this question should become over-regulated. It would even be better to set a limit of expenditure for the various schools,

rather than to make an authoritative list of books to be supplied

Apart from the provision of books for the separate and private use of pupils is the urgent need of facilities for practical work

I am certain that each elementary school should have a *large spare classroom* fitted with some tables and a simple woodwork bench, not elaborately equipped for technical joinery, but arranged for constructive light handicraft of all kinds—work with three-ply wood, cardboard work, gesso decoration, drawing, and painting—so that the artistic and constructive, or what is known in the New Psychology as the extraverbal side of education, may not be neglected. The secondary school has its laboratories and artrooms, the public school its experimental workshops. I am only pleading for one general room where it may be easier to “learn by doing.” I know that already in ordinary classrooms and on ordinary school desks much is done. A general workroom would make a rapid advance more possible. Such a room might well be left open for hobby work after ordinary school sessions, and in the country be part of the arrangement of the projected village institutes. Professor

Lethaby has reminded us that our Gothic cathedrals were not the work of monks only. They were the work of the people, of the peasants and the burghers, and of the guilds, and the sculpture, the wrought metal, the carved screens which astonish us to-day were the work of the village mason, the village carpenter, and the village blacksmith. Let the schools help to restore the right of the workman to express himself in his work and to rejoice in it.

This does not mean that we want to teach any boy a trade at school, but it does mean that we do not wish education to be so introverted that to go to a trade would be distasteful to him. Overalls are as honourable as black coats, and often much more attractive. This country depends very largely for its success upon its genius for engineering and other trades of mechanism. The most successful toys for a British boy are those that he is allowed to make for himself. We want both elementary and secondary pupils to get an all-round educational development not biased in favour of black-coated occupations, so that our national industries may be properly manned and developed.

## CHAPTER XII

### THE TYRANNY OF RIGID CLASSIFICATION

There is a caste system in the grading of schools, and those who oppose it are accused of disloyalty to a fixed order of things

We hear much now of educational overlapping. It is regarded as a sort of poaching. Lovers of a clear-cut scheme of things require it to be stated what the exact functions of each particular type of school are or ought to be. That a school should grow, develop, change its type—really the most natural thing in the world—is a matter of grave concern to the scheme lovers. Their ideal is derived from architecture. One sort of school should be as the ground floor, another sort of school as the middle floor, and the university as the roof and crown of things. Yet a small country grammar school has, in fact, become a celebrated public school, and the change from elementary to secondary is not unknown. Those who value schools more than schemes may well at this time put in a plea for clas-



ticity, for special development, and for the *sud* in the educational algebra, viz the personality of the teacher. There is a village school in the Midlands where the master, being a geologist, has made his pupils, who ought to have been in love with methods of growing cabbages and turnips, expert and interested students of the geology of the district. There was a village schoolma'am whose studies in the dramatic versions of history made Mr Holmes, the chief inspector, almost lyrical in her praise. One has seen original verse from a city elementary school which is unequalled by anything of a similar kind done in a high school. And one almost believes there are some secondary schools in which the standard of work is so high that nothing but modesty prevents them from applying for a university charter! Indeed one of our modern universities was originally a training college for pupil teachers. All this is what it should not be, if directors and scheme artists had their own way. Not for them the poet's view

There are nine and forty ways  
Of constructing tribal hys  
And every single one of them is right '

In Scotland it is not unusual to have a public primary school with a high school top. The report on the education of the adolescent holds that transfer to another type of school at the age of 11 plus ought to be the normal state of things. Miss E. R. Conway, a member of the Consultative Committee, and herself at that time the head of a large elementary school, suggested that where advanced instruction could be adequately given in existing schools the larger schools should not be broken up by wild enthusiasm for a new scheme. The opportunity of developing the advanced work of the elementary school, the overlapping if you will, is most useful in giving a stimulus to the staff, and to the older pupils, as Miss Conway points out, "a sense of responsibility towards the younger which develops into the mutual care and consideration which is so helpful in the life of the community." One particular kind of overlapping is winked at by the authorities of secondary schools. It is that of making provision in connexion with high schools of preparatory and kindergarten departments dealing with children below the age of 11 plus. Those who are responsible for such

a poaching on the domains of elementary education believe that where the parents can afford to give their children the advantage at an early age of better buildings, smaller classes, and more generous equipment, it is foolish not to do so, or to be in any way bound to a distinct scheme of separate instruction which would make it imperative that all children under 11 should receive their early education in the same type of school.

Then there is the question of the private school which goes its way without regard to the national system, and is so independent that it may give either the best or the worst education in the country, and leaves some to believe that inefficiency is too often the price we are willing to pay for freedom. We are still unable to make up our minds that all teachers should be professionally qualified before they are allowed to teach. Yet, as the *Education Outlook* has it, "we demand that the Harley Street specialist shall have the same preliminary training as the panel doctor. We cannot secure true unification in the teaching profession until we have agreed generally that all teachers should be required to spend some time in considering the principles and methods

of teaching. This does not mean that everybody must attend a training college. The necessary training may be obtained in other ways, but nobody should be regarded as a properly equipped member of the teaching profession who has not been trained for the work. We shall always have categories of teachers, but all should have some accepted minimum of professional qualification." Some university teachers are quite scandalized at the very notion of any compulsory registration of teachers; such a proposal might one day stretch as far as to include university teachers themselves—the thought makes them shiver. They might even have to give lectures subject to expert criticism.

There is not much overlapping within the curriculum of a well-planned secondary school course where promotions are made yearly. It is the business of the staff in consultation with the head, or the head in consultation with the staff, to arrange a graduated syllabus of instruction so that there is adequate time for each stage of the instruction, and while there may be recapitulation there is not overlapping. A large school may by a series of parallel forms provide that more intelligent

pupils may go faster or take additional subjects. Thus it is not an unusual plan for 'A' forms to take an additional language. Special difficulties of curriculum are met in special ways. For example, it may be that a school allows its pupils at an early stage the choice of Latin or a second modern language, as German or Spanish. It follows that when such pupils complete their school course with two modern languages and wish to enter the university to study languages on the arts side the university will rightly demand Latin up to matriculation level, *le professeur sans Latin* not being an English university product. In such cases schools will probably adopt in the Sixth Form work a two years' intense course of Latin for such pupils during which they may reasonably be expected to gain the qualification desired.

Similar plans may be employed for those pupils who start Greek later in the school course than Latin, in schools where the number of classical students is small. Where promotions are made terminally, it is quite possible that there is danger of considerable overlapping—the problem of supplying the remedy is one for those who believe in the

system For certain subjects, e.g. mathematics, the division of the school into sets is held to be the most scientific method of work, although time tabling for it is not easy The real danger of overlapping or underlapping is when a pupil is transferred from one school to another or from one part of the country to another Nothing but a uniform national scheme would completely remove such difficulties but the price in loss of freedom to be paid for such a boon would be devastating It would be a national calamity Certain associations of teachers approach the question of school certificate examinations as if they had such a national mechanical system in their minds They cry out for standardization and uniformity There are headmasters who advocate a single scholarship examination at the Higher School Certificate level for the whole country One is reminded of the examinations in Germany before the war

It is quite possible that our present system of Higher School Certificate examinations used as scholarship tests needs some revision The relation of school to university is always an interesting subject of inquiry There are,

one learns, some universities (or are they university colleges?) where it is felt that the pupils nowadays do not come up to college with minds sufficiently blank for the university authorities to work upon properly. The university die-hards would stop advanced instruction in the schools and take boys earlier to college. But surely this is not a very generally held opinion. The honours schools of the universities have received enormous support from the advanced courses in the secondary schools. The record of the State scholars is inspiring. The honours degrees obtained in 1924-5-6 were so many that of the total number of students only five boys and two girls obtained pass degrees, and one boy and two girls failed to obtain degrees, whilst 48·6 per cent of the boys and 25 per cent of the girls obtained *First Classes*. Mr W. C. Fletcher, the Board's late Chief Inspector of Secondary Schools, whose statements are always scrupulously made, tells us that from 1909 to 1921 the number of boys proceeding to the university more than doubled and that of the girls more than trebled. What the universities might rightly complain of, and what might usefully be

the subject of conference between them and the schools, is the excessive demands of the syllabuses of the Higher Certificate examinations. If these are too wide for the ordinary student, and if he becomes in a sense tired or stale in school, as one becomes over-trained and stale in sports, some alterations might usefully be made. The syllabus of the examinations must never dominate the curriculum and dictate the school method. Teaching is never good unless the pupil at the end of it has the 'Oliver Twist' complex. Mr Fletcher puts it "The first and obvious duty of the staff is to teach, that is really to guide, stimulate, and *help then pupils to learn*". If the pupil at school is introduced to too wide a syllabus it is likely that the teacher lets examination take charge, and in his desire to help his pupil to pass hinders him from wishing to continue to learn. It has been suggested that the Higher Certificate papers should have a certain moderately easy section and also a section with very wide choice of more advanced questions.

A real difficulty is presented by the introduction to students of the university qualification of matriculation, i.e. passing an entrance



examination and paying a fee—for none of the universities is absent-minded in this mundane matter of cash. This university qualification tends to obscure the real nature of the School Certificate examination. A matriculation examination is one demanding a good level of success in five special subjects. The practice has grown up of indicating by the letter M which of the School Certificate candidates has passed the School Certificate examination well enough to be regarded as a matriculant. Employers who wish to distinguish one school candidate from another are asking the candidates not what sort of School Certificate they got, i.e. how wide the school curriculum and how well they had done in their examination on it, but merely “Did you get a ‘matric’?” This will in time tend to make the School Certificate dependent on its university utility and make the school curriculum of less importance. The American system of recognizing the school as of such a character that its school records may be accepted by the university is certainly a plan which gives more freedom to the high school than does our own. The university here is making a good profit on its own

accrediting system, and will not lightly give it up. But the schools ought to put the School Certificate in its rightful position, to do all they can to retain control of it, and to fashion it as an instrument for their own convenience, rather than allow it to become an ill-rated *pis-aller* for a university qualification. The School Certificate is the more important because it does overlap the other.

The question still remains whether the pupil should prepare for an intermediate university examination at school. Is not such a plan a stop-gap arrangement of temporary utility? Assuming that the pupil intends to go to a teaching university and not to go to business and in his leisure sits for an external degree, is not the so-called intermediate arts or science examination merely an indication of proficiency likely to find in the honours courses suitable opportunity for good work? If so it is a somewhat clumsy expedient. It would appear better for the schools to encourage their best students to take a higher School Certificate examination instead of a pseudo university qualification. Such an examination teachers could mould their voice is scarcely likely to be

heard in connexion with the other one. The teaching university must stand for something better than the recording of examination success. It surely stands for personal inspiration by distinguished teachers, for extending the love of learning, and widening the bounds of knowledge. It should be the House called Beautiful, and the pilgrims from the schools, as in the great allegory, should be prepared for entering it by lustration, and the clean white robes of a love of truth, beauty, and goodness. There can be, however, no overlapping in the ultimate *ideals* of education. The *venue* changes, but all true education, from the elementary school to the university, and from the university onwards, should aim at the great ends of human life and activity, "the forming and strengthening of character, the training of the tastes which fill and dignify leisure, the awakening and guiding of the intelligence, all placing our learners 'as it were in the fair meadow' of a congenial and inspiring environment", and we owe this statement to an inquiry concerning central schools!

It has been settled that the newest educational "urge" will be better education for

children of 11 and upwards These are now provided for in many ways but most efficiently in secondary schools Those dissatisfied with the alternative education given in less favoured schools advocate what is called "Secondary Education for all" Perhaps this may be translated as giving to all children of 11 and upwards who are capable of educational advance suitable teachers, classrooms, equipment, books and materials, and playing fields The "central" schools will therefore be in the forefront of educational experiment There is too great a tendency to distinguish between the essentials of education facilities in secondary schools and in the others But it must not be rashly supposed that even if such facilities are given the standard of attainment reached will be immediately that which is now definitely connoted by the term "secondary"

A modern secondary school—we reject as fantastic the differential terms "modern" and "grammar" suggested, in malicious fun, one must suppose, by the Hadow report—is not academic, or technical, or commercial It gives its pupils a systematic well graded course of work which forms the foundation

of a good general education. It is a four-years-course school for many of its pupils, but essentially a six- or seven-years-course school for its best pupils. It does, it is true, provide an avenue to the universities but to all departments of university work, e.g. engineering, chemistry, botany, commerce. It provides access also to accountancy, pharmacy, book-keeping, and other branches of commerce and industry. It is its *standard of work* which is secondary, rather than its curriculum or equipment. This standard has been steadily rising on account of the increasing educational efficiency and importance of the school staffs. In a secondary school to-day the majority of the teachers are *graduates in honours of some university*. There is no reason why, if properly encouraged, the central school as we now know it may not become in a few years by honourable effort a secondary school. If this type of school were as well staffed and equipped as a secondary school there would be a strong probability that such an advance could be made. The chief obstacle at present is the additional cost which such help would entail. If we can escape such tyrannies as rigid

classification and a mathematical precision of administration and allow a fair opportunity to all schools, there is still the possibility that under energetic leadership the work done by an increasing number of schools will improve in its standard, so that the arrival of secondary education for all need not be indefinitely postponed

Tyrannies of the school have this useful effect — they produce sturdy opposition. President Coolidge reported that his minister's attitude towards sin was that he was "agin it", a sincere statement of a strong position

The real defeat of the educationalist would be to cease effort in opposing the enemies of his freedom